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On avance souvent l'opinion qu'une augmentation du nombre de professeurs mâles dans les toutes premières années d'école réduirait le nombre de problèmes scolaires chez les garçons. La présente étude évalue cette hypothèse à la lumière de deux théories majeures sur le développement du rôle sexuel (la théorie de l'apprentissage social et la théorie du développement cognitif) et des résultats d'études sur le rendement et le développement des enfants en rapport avec le sexe du professeur.

L'étude, qui prend la forme d'une revue de la recherche, s'appuie sur une bibliographie d'une centaine de titres, ouvrages et articles de langue anglaise pour la majorité postérieurs à 1970.

Les auteurs en viennent à la conclusion que l'hypothèse selon laquelle les professeurs mâles réduiraient les problèmes scolaires des garçons ne reçoit pas beaucoup d'appui, ni empirique, ni théorique.

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Male teacher effects on young children: a theoretical and empirical consideration.

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Male Teacher Effects on Young Children:

A Theoretical and Empirical Consideration*

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*This work was supported by a grant from the Quebec Department of Education to the first author.

Abstract

The argument has been frequently made that an increase in the number of male teachers working at the early school levels would reduce the number of school-related problems for boys. This argument is evaluated in the context of two major theories of sex-role development, the social learning and cognitive developmental theories, and the results of an examination of the studies of children's performance and development in relation to teacher's gender. The hypothesis that male teachers reduce boys' problems in school does not receive much support empirically or theoretically.

Male Teacher Effects on Young Children: A Theoretical and Empirical Evaluation.

Introduction

Parents, teachers, and psychologists have long made frequent and intense demands for more male teachers at the early school levels (Biller, 1973, 1974a; 1974b; Firester & Firester, 1974-75; Hull, 1969; Sexton, 1969; Slaughter, 1969; St. John, 1932; Vairo, 1969). It has been claimed that male teachers would foster better development of children, particularly that of boys, and thus would alleviate some of the greater number of school problems boys have compared to girls. This greater incidence of problems is illustrated by boys' higher failure rates and higher rates of referrals to specialists for difficulties related to the classroom (Gates, 1961; Johnson, 1976; Vroegh, 1976).

Many of these demands for more male teachers are based upon the views of psychologists who examine the sex-role identification and development of children. Erikson (1973) believes that the preponderance of female teachers in the elementary grades contributes to the development of conflicts in sexual identification in boys, with boys regarding learning and classroom skills as feminine and possibly resisting them. One example among many is an analysis of the sex role identification of school-related objects (Hill, Hubbs & Verble, 1974), which concludes that, on the whole, children may view school activities as more appropriate for the female than the male role.

It has also been claimed that male teachers are more effective teachers of boys than female teachers, being better able to deal with boys'

presumably more active classroom behaviour (Peltier, 1968), as well as aiding boys in achieving masculine sex identity (Slaughter, 1969; Vairo, 1969). The assumption is made by some concerned parents and professionals that children need exposure to male teachers per se. It has been asserted that since young children are brought up primarily by their mothers and other females, the relative scarcity of their contact with adult males leads them to need and to value contact with male adults more highly than with female adults (Le Triplett, 1968; Maglio, 1977; Strickler & Phillips, 1970). This argument is thought particularly relevant in the case of boys reared in fatherless families or in homes where contacts with fathers are relatively few or inadequate (Biller, 1974a, 1974b; Lee, 1973).

Male primary teachers themselves appear to firmly believe that an increase in their ranks would benefit the education system (Meek, 1978). A study by Manning (1978) found that male teachers felt they contributed in terms of increased ability in assisting with discipline problems, provision of paternal substitutes, and effectiveness in dealing with parents, compared to female teachers.

Advocates of greater numbers of male teachers in the elementary school grades believe that the expectancies and reinforcement patterns of male teachers would differ from those of female teachers which are thought to favour girls. Goebes and Shore (1975) found that teachers considered girls to be closer to the ideal than boys on a sloppy-neat continuum, as well as closer to the ideal on other preferred qualities. The argument is also made that the education system at the lower levels, being loaded with traditionally "feminine"values and expectations, results in teachers reinforcing "feminine" behaviors such as quietness and

obedience in both boys and girls (Biber, Miller & Dyer, 1972; Etaugh, Collins & Gerson, 1974; Fagot & Patterson, 1969). Negative and non-reinforcement of "masculine" behaviour by teachers presumably could lead boys to conclude that acting like a boy does not lead to success in school. Thus, it is hoped that the presence of male teachers would "defeminize" the milieu (Sexton, 1969). Sexton takes one of the most extreme positions, arguing that female teachers, resentful of their generally inferior position in society, are actively hostile against masculine boys.

Data from cross-cultural studies is frequently presented to support the contention that greater numbers of male teachers in the elementary school system would reduce academic problems, such as reading difficulties, for boys. In countries where the proportion of male teachers is greater (Japan, Britain, Germany), there are fewer reading difficulties for boys compared to girls than in North America (Janis et al., 1969; Johnson, 1973-74; Preston, 1962).

Some of the differential difficulty rate in school adjustment between boys and girls is conjectured to be due to such factors as sex differences in psychological and physiological rates of maturation. However, a major contributory factor is thought to be the greater incompatibility between expected pupil role and sex role for boys (Dwyer, 1976b; Lee & Voivadas, 1977; Waller, 1969). Presumably, having more male teachers in the school system would alter either the psychological environment of the school or boys' concepts of their sex roles so as to create greater compatibility between the two. Arguments favouring an increase in male teachers appear to assume, either explicitly or implicitly, that male and female teachers differ in basic characteristics and teaching styles in such a way as to make a mea-

surable qualitative difference in their effect on children. Ultimately, the contention that more male teachers should be hired is based upon the assumption that there is a difference in boys' adjustment, achievement and attitudes when taught by male rather than female teachers.

This review of the literature will touch upon the two assumptions, that male and female teachers differ in their characteristics and that young children value contact with adult males more than with adult females. The main focus of this paper will be on studies examining the development and behavior of young boys and girls in the early school years in relation to the sex of the teacher. The early school years of the child represent the period when attitudes towards school and sex roles are in the process of rapid and crucial development, and thus should presumably be most open to the influence of the male teachers.

Theoretical Context

It is noteworthy that most of the arguments and research in this area have not attempted to use a theoretical context, but have relied upon common sense, an alluring but sometimes untrustworthy guide. Two major theories of gender identification and development, the cognitive developmental and the social learning theories, are relevant to this question. Their theoretical implications as to how and the extent to which male and female teachers do differ in their impact on children will be considered. Both theories have been discussed extensively elsewhere (Bandura, 1969; Kohlberg, 1966, 1969; Kohlberg & Ullian, 1974; Mischel, 1966, 1970) and consequently will be described very briefly in this paper.

The social learning theory emphasizes the influence of environmental variables on the learning of sex roles. Male teachers presumably could

differ as socialization agents for boys from female teachers in two ways. Firstly, if there actually are important differences between female and male teachers' teaching styles, expectancies, and reinforcement contingencies for student behaviors, greater congruence could be predicted between the values and expectancies of male teachers and boys than between those of female teachers and boys. Such greater congruence could presumably facilitate the selective shaping of pupil role and male sex role in such a way as to make them more compatible.

However, the research examining elementary male teachers' expectancies, reinforcement contingencies and teaching styles has not proved them greatly different from those of female teachers (Arnold, 1968; Lahaderne, 1976; Vroegh, 1976). Brophy and Good (1974) summarize the literature by concluding that male teachers treat boys and girls similarly to the way female teachers do. More recent studies also support this position. For example, it was found that the personality characteristics and reinforcement contingencies of male and female caregivers in childcare centers were similar (Robinson & Canaday, 1978). Similarly, the androgeny scores (Smith, 1979), rate of emmission of verbal approval or disapproval for student behaviours (Brownlee, 1976), rate of student referrals to guidance services (Levine, 1977), and attitudes towards their jobs (Wright, 1977) of male and female teachers have been found not to differ significantly. Thus, there is not much research support for the belief that male elementary teachers differ greatly from female teachers in functioning as a source of expectancies and reinforcement.

The second function of male teachers, as predicted by social learning theory, revolves about their possible role as male models. Contact on a

daily and prolonged basis with male teachers could serve to help clarify the conception of the masculine sex role for young boys who presumably are in the process of evolving a sex role differentiated from that of females. In addition, since children are supposedly reinforced for imitating same-sex models (Mischel, 1970) male models should also give boys more opportunity and incentive to imitate a male functioning in an academic setting.

However, there are a number of factors which serve to mitigate the effectiveness of the male teacher as a model for boys. On the basis of their extensive review of the experimental literature, Maccoby & Jacklin (1974) deduced that young children do not characteristically select the model whose sex matches their own. Similarily, Frieze et al., (1978) and Constantinople (1979) concluded that the hypothesis of same-sex modelling is not well supported by the research. Barkley, Ullman, Oho & Brecht (1977) specified that the sex of the model is of less importance than the sex-appropriateness of the modelled behavior relative to the observer. Finally, Perry and Bussey (1979) have demonstrated that the extent to which the child believes that the model behavior is ordinarily appropriate to the child's sex limits the child's imitation of the model. Thus, as children's conceptions of sex-appropriate behavior become developed, the impact of male teachers as models should be considerably reduced since boys would presumably characteristically be more influenced by behavior that they preceive to be suitable to them rather than the behaviour the male teacher exhibits <u>per se</u>. In addition, it is important to emphasize that a great deal of children's information about appropriate sex-role behavior is given by peers (Lynn, 1969; Mischel, 1970); mass media (Sternglanz & Serbin, 1974), storybooks (Ashton, 1978) and

other sources over which parents and teachers have limited control. These sources have typically not presented academic behaviour at early school levels as particularly masculine. In this context of interacting mitigating factors, it is quite possible that contact with male teachers would not have any significant effects upon boys' development, particularly since the teacher-student role network of interaction is so salient in the classrooms that the behaviors of the male teachers might not be perceived as relevant or suitable models by boys. Finally, it should be noted that male teachers in the classroom are not usually concerned with providing an example of particularly stereotypical masculine behavior, but rather supposedly are concerned with providing examples of values and behavior that are suitable for both girls and boys.

It is possible, nevertheless, that for young boys at the preschool and kindergarten level, who do not yet have as well developed conceptions of sex roles as do older children, male teachers could have some effect in making certain behaviors be perceived as masculine sex-appropriate because they are being performed by males. Bandura (1969) has indicated the importance of motivational factors in reproducing behavior and, consequently, it could be predicted that more academically oriented behavior could be copied from male teachers by very young boys who learn to see such behaviour as appropriate to their gender role.

There is another way in which a male model might influence boys. If boys are relatively deprived of contact with adult males, they could value such contact when it does occur more so than contact with adult females. As mentioned earlier, a central rationale for the proposed increase of male teachers at early school levels is the provision of a male presence

for children from homes where the father is absent or not particularly salient. In a review of the literature, Shinn (1978) concluded that children perform more poorly on cognitive tests if the father is absent or has little supportive interaction with them. Biller's reviews (1970, 1973; 1974a; 1974b) reported that boys with absent fathers have masculine development deficits as well as intellectual ones. Boys in particular are thought to suffer from the absence of the father or from low levels of positive interaction with the father. At the nursery and kindergarten level, Radin (1973), Reis & Gold (1977) and Fowler (1977) have found that boys from such homes suffer in their intellectual development, while Coonrod (1977), Mussen and Distler (1959), Santrock (1970), and Shelton (1973) have found that they suffer in masculine sex-role development.

Anecdotal case histories given by the advocates of male teachers also present this argument, stressing the importance of providing a male presence for boys who are relatively deprived of contact with males (Sciarra, 1971-72). However, the few studies that controlled for the presence of the father when examining boys' achievement in relation to the sex of the teacher did not have positive findings (Lowery, 1973; Schell & Courtney, 1979; Vroegh, 1973; Vroegh, 1976).

To summarize, the social learning theory leads to three possible predictions: that young boys with male teachers could develop more adequate concepts of and presumably preference for masculine behavior; secondly, that these boys could be more likely to perceive academic behavior as masculine; and thirdly, that they could be more likely to engage in such behavior. However, such effects should not be great due to the mitigating factors discussed above. It would also seem that if male teachers do

have any effects on children's development, these effects should be most apparent in classrooms with very young children at the preschool and kindergarten levels.

The cognitive developmental theory stresses the central position of the child's gender identity in organizing his or her values, attitudes and behavior. Kohlberg (1966) postulates that the child has an egocentric tendency to value positively anything associated with or like himself and "values and seeks objects and activities that are representative of his own sex" (Mussen, 1969, p. 725). Hence, it might appear that male teachers should have an impact on the development of young boys by extending the boys' concepts of masculine behavior to include academic values and objects. However, Kohlberg (1969) also argues that the sex-role concepts of young children stem from the child's interpretations of physical differences between the sexes and the apparent social ramifications of these differences. These interpretations are adhered to quite rigidly and the child may use the concrete clue of gender to make a variety of distinctions, some of which may be inappropriate. For example, the child may conclude on the basis of her or his observations of family life that men can't cook. The simplistic nature of the sex-role concepts is due to the limitations imposed by the early stages of the child's cognitive development. Hence, Kohlberg argues that the sex-role concepts of young children are relatively insensitive to environmental variation. The argument that intense prolonged contact with many male teachers should have some effect on very young boys who do not yet have well developed sex-role stereotypes is not supported by cognitive developmental theory. However, it can be argued that as children become more sophisticated cognitively they should be able

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to modify their sex-role schemata when presented with new data that contradicts their classifications (Frieze et al., 1978). Thus, male teachers should be able to modify older children's sex-role concepts more easily than those of younger children who can only process relatively simple and inflexible concepts of sex-roles.

Both social learning and cognitive developmental theories would also predict individual differences in the responsitivity of boys to male teachers. Social learning theory places emphasis on variations due to specific situational stimuli and reinforcement histories, which could cause certain boys to respond selectively to specific types of socialization agents such as male teachers. For example, working-class boys could very well be more responsive to male than to female teachers. Kohlberg's position leads to the prediction that boys who identify highly with the masculine role should find the activities of male rather than female teachers more appealing. This hypothesis is supported by the finding that boys who identified highly with the masculine role were more effectively conditioned by male experimenters than by female experimenters (Epstein & Liverant, 1963). Similarily, more masculine boys recalled more behaviour shown by a male model (Perry & Perry, 1975), although other studies have failed to confirm the hypothesis (Frieze, et al., 1978). Consequently, both theories support the position that it would be more interesting to look at selected subgroups upon whom male teachers should have greater influence than at the general classroom population.

There are fewer theoretical implications for the presence of male teachers for girls. The cognitive developmental theory would lead to the prediction that male teachers should have little or no effect on girls' gen-

der identity unless the school environment becomes so dominated by male teachers as to cause the young girl to conceive of academic values as masculine, as may occur with students at the higher educational levels. The social learning theory leads to the prediction that girls should be minimally influenced by the presence of the male teacher, particularly if the expectancies, reinforcement contingencies and teaching styles seem basically similar for male and female teachers. As Biller (1974a, 1974b) Lee and Voivadas (1977) point out, however, even though the negative effects of any incompatibilities that exist between pupil role and sex role are readily conceivable for boys, the very congruence of sex role with pupil role for girls in the school system probably has more subtle and possibly even more invidious effects on girls, relating to their later relatively lower achievement.

Sex of Teacher and Children's Performance in Preschool and Kindergarten Children.

Only a small number of controlled studies directly compare the effects of male and female teachers on young boys and girls and these yield few results that are both significant and important.

A thorough attempt to defeminize the nursery classroom was undertaken by Abbott (1969) who followed the development of 27 boys through all-boy kindergarten and grade one classes taught by a male teacher and male teaching aides (Le Triplett, 1968). Even with such a comprehensively masculine environment, the effects were not as strong and consistent as one might expect from previous claims. At the completion of the kindergarten year the boys in the all-male class did not differ significantly on masculine sex-role identification scores from the boys in a coeduca-

tional class, although by the end of the second year the experimental boys' scores were higher. The results of this study indicated that the masculine environment over a long term raised male sex-role identification scores and produced somewhat more favorable attitudes towards school with some tendency to view a few of the accoutrements of school as more masculine, but improved personality adjustment was not associated with the more masculine environment. According to Brophy and Good (1974) a follow-up study of these boys reported that the boys who had had male teachers retained their higher masculinity scores and had better school attendance than the other boys. It should be noted that this study appears to have confounded the variables of sex of teacher and sex-segregated classrooms. As well, no measures of achievement were used.

Brophy and Laosa (1973) studied kindergarten children taught by a married couple using a male-oriented curriculum. This class was compared to children taught by a sole female teacher using a standard curriculum. No consistent significant differences were found between the two groups on measures of sex typing, sociometric play patterns, attitudes towards school, and various measures of abilities and task performance. The only noteworthy finding was the poorer performance on spatial ability of boys and girls taught by the female teacher, with the difference being significant for the first year sample and not replicated the following year. Brophy & Good (1974) judge this finding of greater gains in spatial ability by children taught by the male-female team as relatively unimportant and explainable in terms of the masculine content of the curriculum alone. This study confounded the number and sex of teacher. In addition, the male-female team were a married couple, who may have been perceived by their students as less differentiated from

each other than male and female teachers in general. Such factors might serve to reduce the impact of the male teacher.

Sciarra (1971) investigated the effects of eight weeks of exposure to male role models on the behavior of preschool disadvantaged boys, most of whom were black. Role models were business employee volunteers rather than qualified teachers, and no significant differences were found between groups of children exposed to male role models and to female models. However, trends in the data suggested that boys' aggressive behaviors became more unstable while exposed to male models and that interest in school declined during a period of intermittent exposure to the model after a period of daily exposure. In addition, anecdotal teacher reports suggested that the school and home behavior of some children with problems of aggression and withdrawal improved.

One study was conducted with children from 18 classes taught by teams consisting of either two female teachers or a male and a female teacher (Lee & Wolinsky, 1973). Preschool to second grade classes were sampled. The boys preferred male teachers and although they in general perceived male teachers as not favoring either sex, they also perceived them as strongly preferring boys when asked to specify the teacher's favorite child. The authors interpreted these results as indicating that the boys affiliated themselves with the male teachers.

Another study conducted at the preschool level (Gold, Reis & Berger, 1979) also found few significant effects. This study compared four-year-old boys and girls taught by one of eight teams composed of a male and female teaching team with children taught by one of five teams composed of two female teachers. Boys taught by the mixed-sex team tended to improve more on a measure of mathematical achievement than boys taught only by female teachers, although the boys still performed more poorly than the girls in the study. In addition, both boys and girls were rated significantly more favorably on their

classroom behavior by both members of the male-female teaching teams than were children by the female teaching team members. Sex of teacher did not relate to the children's gender development, school enjoyment, or self-confidence. Similarly, this study took into account the teacher's sex-role orientation which revealed no consistent significant pattern of association with the children's performance. However, these results reflect only a four-month period of contact with the teachers.

A study was made by Lowery (1977) of classroom dependency and modeling behavior of father-absent and father-present preschool boys with a male teacher. Using a sample comprised of only 16 black students and two male teachers, Lowery found that contrary to prediction, father-absent boys did not imitate or show greater dependency on a male teacher than father-present boys.

Perdue & Connor (1978), studying preschool children, taught by four male-female teaching teams, found that male and female teachers touched children of their own sex more frequently than children of the opposite sex. Boys touched female teachers less often than male teachers and touching of female teachers was more likely to be incidental in nature than friendly. However, touching behavior of girls seemed less sensitive to the sex of the adult.

An experimental study (Serbin, Connor & Citron, note 1) compared the responses of four-year-old children to the modelling of play with toys, stereotyped as either feminine or masculine, by male and female teachers in four classes. Male teachers were more effective than female teachers in inducing boys to play with toys when the toys were masculine sex-typed. Female and male teachers were equally successful in eliciting boys' play with feminine sex-typed toys and in influencing girls' play with toys perceived as either

male or female preferred. The finding that male and female teachers are equally effective in influencing children's activities except when male teachers are performing behaviors which are congruent with male sex role stereotypes, leads the authors to suggest that boys' response to male teachers is mediated by the stereotyping of the teachers' activities. This finding is in agreement with the theoretical predictions discussed above.

These studies conducted with very young children, therefore, provide some slight support for the hypotheses that when boys are taught by male teachers, they have a greater masculine sex identification, better performance in mathematics and spatial aptitude, and better attitudes towards and behavior in school (see Table I). It is noteworthy that each study reported more failures to find results than significant outcomes. Finally, because of the different questions asked and different measures used, none of these findings have been substantiated by more than one study.

Children in Elementary Grades

A handful of studies have also examined the relation of the sex of the instructor to the development of children in the early elementary grades. Studies at this level have not produced positive findings with the exception of that of Lee & Wolinsky (1973) and Abbott (1969), as previously indicated.

One project (Gentile, 1974) found that female rather than male tutors facilitated better reading achievement gains on one of two measures for Spanish-American boys in the second and third grades, while at the fourth grade level, tutor sex was not a significant factor. Another study (Crawford, Elliot & Johanson, 1972) attempting to improve boys' reading skills, found that male reading helpers were able to improve significantly the reading achievement scores of boys in grades 1 to 6 compared to boys in control classes who only participated in the regular school reading program.

However, this study used only male aides and consequently reveals nothing about the relative efficacy of male and female teachers. Improvement in reading achievement scores could be caused by additional instruction and stimulation regardless of the sex of the reading aide.

McFarlane (1969-70) found that the participation of men in first grade instruction did not significantly improve either reading or mathematics achievement scores, or masculine sex-preference. In this study, the participating males were not fully qualified teachers. Instead, they were education students who functioned as aides junior to a female instructor, factors which may have limited their influence on the children.

Levine (1977), in the study previously cited of English rural seven to ten-year-old children, examined the adjustment of children taught by male or female teachers. Groups of 15 male and 15 female teachers, matched for years of experience, age and teaching style rated the children in their classes. Both male and female teachers rated the boys as more poorly adjusted than girls. There was no evidence suggesting that boys with male teachers were better adjusted.

None of these studies supports the contention that children in the early elementary grades would derive greater benefit for their academic or intellectual achievement, sex role identification, or school adjustment by having male rather than female teachers. Nor do laboratory analogues for this type of classroom study support this contention. Peterson (1972) used male and female experimenters to test boys and girls in a paired-associate learning task which was conceived as an analogue to the task of learning to read. Children in the first and fifth grades were studied. The sex of the experimenter was found to have no relation to paired-associate learning performance, which did not differ for girls and boys. Pederson, Shinedling and Johnson (1968) studied the performance of grade 3 girls and boys when tested by male and fe-

male examiners on the arithmetic subtest of the WISC. A significant sex of subject by sex of examiner interaction was found such that subjects scored best when tested by examiners of the same sex. However, this was due primarily to the performance of the girls, with the boys' scores not differing significantly in the two conditions. Consequently, Pedersen et al. advanced the hypothesis that female mathematics teachers would aid the school performance of girls. This hypothesis was not supported in a later study with fifth grade children (Shinedling & Pedersen, 1970).

Studies with children in the later elementary school grades again generally fail to support the hypothesis that male teachers particularly benefit school children, although as for very young children, there are some partially supportive findings (see Table I). There are more studies examining the effects of teacher gender at this level than at the earlier ones. Smith (1971) studying only boys, found that 5th grade boys having male teachers had lower psychological effeminacy scores, better school related self-concepts, and better mathematical problem-solving scores than boys taught by female teachers. A study with a small group of children at the fourth grade level (Shindedling & Pederson, 1970) found that male teachers facilitated the academic performance of boys on reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, and arithmetic reasoning measures. Steele (1967) also studying only boys, found that being taught by male teachers did not influence their reading achievement, but did increase masculine sex-role preference and teacher-pupil identification in 4th grade boys. It has also been found that sixth grade students perceived their relationships to be more positive with male than with female teachers (Forslund & Hull, 1972; Hull, 1969). An English study (Murray, 1977) found that even though female teachers were perceived by their students as having a more consensual view of the school

system than male teachers, the students of the male teachers had more consensual attitudes than those of female teachers. Despite these findings, the students with female teachers had higher scores in mathematics and English. Etaugh & Harlow, (1965) in an observational study of fifth and sixth grades with two male and two female teachers, did not find differences between boys and girls in classroom behaviors, such as paying attention, appropriate reading and writing, hand raising, inappropriate behaviors and in overall attitudes toward school. There were, however signs of differences in attitudes toward teachers, with both boys and girls rating same-sex teachers more positively than opposite sex teachers. Nevertheless, boys misbehaved more and paid less attention in male teachers' classes. Both male and female teachers scolded boys more often than girls, and boys were praised more by female teachers. The authors concluded that though children prefer teachers of the same sex, the sex of teachers has only limited differential effect on pupil behavior.

In general, however, earlier reviews of the literature have concluded that the majority of the studies with older elementary school children indicate that the sex of the teacher is not an important variable (Brophy & Good, 1974; Vroegh, 1976). More recent studies have obtained similar results. Schell and Courtney (1979), adressed themselves to the question of the effect of male teachers on academic achievement of sixth grade boys whose fathers were absent. They concluded that male teachers, per se, would not be more effective than female teachers in producing academic growth of grade six father-absent boys. Henderson (1977), studied self-concept of fifth and sixth grade students in relation to teacher race and sex. He found that self-concept increased significantly for black male students with white female teachers and black female students with white male teachers as well as for white male students with white male teachers. These findings seemed to suggest that race of the teacher

and student is at least as important a variable as teacher sex. In a study of sixth grade students by Woolfolk, Garlinsky & Nicholich (1977), two male and two female teachers' positive verbal behavior influenced the magnitude of student self-disclosure scores, but no effect of teacher sex was evident.

Some studies have found that female rather than male teachers produce superior results in the performance and attitudes of boys and girls (Lahaderne, 1976; Ober, 1973). Finally, it is worth noting that some studies conducted at the post-elementary level where the numbers of male teacher are greatly increased, suggest that the sex of the teacher interacts in a complex fashion with other variables to influence student performance. Such variables as the sex-typed nature of the school subject and the psychological masculinity-femininity scores of the teacher and the student appear to be relevant (Halperin, 1971; Rothman, Welch & Walberg, 1969; Toback, 1973; Walberg, Welch & Rothman, 1969).

Anecdotal Reports

There are a number of highly enthusiastic anecdotal-type reports describing the benefits of male teachers and male teaching aides in classrooms (Kyselka, 1966;Maglio, 1977; Le Triplett, 1968; Sciarra, 1971-72). These reports are not commensurate with the partial and negative findings of the controlled studies. Moreover, many such reports describe classes which are not only taught by males but are also gender segregated and incorporate and stress male-oriented curricula and activities, thus making it difficult to tease out possible differential effects. As well, anecdotal descriptions of these kinds of classroom situations report benefits to kindergarten and early elementary school boys in areas related to sex-identity, school enjoyment, behavior management and emotional adjustment rather than in areas of achievement. Anecdotal reports also often stress the importance of qualitative factors such as the level of masculinity of male teachers and their skill in interacting with and teaching children, and such factors are difficult to control and are often not manipulated in the studies.

In addition, unlike the controlled studies, some glowing reports often focus on specific children with particular behavior or emotional problems, rather than reporting general trends (Maglio, 1977). Finally, one may reiterate that the subjective and uncontrolled nature of anecdotal reports makes it difficult to evaluate them accurately.

Interestingly, there are anecdotal descriptions of all-boy, masculine curriculum programs involving female rather than male teachers that are similarly enthusiastic (Burgdorf, 1970; Kernkamp & Price, 1972; Ring, 1970; Strickler & Phillips, 1970). It has been found that boys taught by female teachers in an all-boy classroom are more likely to perceive reading in a classroom setting as masculine (McCraken, 1973). Such reports could lead to the tentative suggestion that the effect of male teachers is relatively minor compared to that of male-segregated classrooms and masculine programs. However, some controlled studies have found that segregating classrooms by sex does not lead to improvements in performance or behavior (Tagatz, 1966). In addition, large scale studies in England comparing sex-segregated and integrated schools concluded that the coeducational schools provided more favorable environments for both boys' and girls' academic and social adjustment (Dale, 1969, 1971, 1973-74, 1974). The weak research support given to the hypotheses of beneficial effects due to male teachers or sex-segregated classrooms leaves "masculine" activity-oriented school programs as opposed to more passive and traditional ones as a leading contender for alleviation of the greater difficulty boys experience in schools. It has already been demonstrated that boys' reading performance varies with the format and content of the presentation (Dwyer, 1976a). Girls could also benefit from similar programs, which place emphasis upon the active participation of the child (Zimet, 1976) and developing in children the qualities of independence and assertiveness (Biller, 1974).

Conclusions

There are not many findings that are both significant and important which indicate benefits for boys' sex identification, academic achievement, and school adjustment accrued from the presence of male teachers. This supports the arguments based on social learning and cognitive developmental theories that, although the presence of male teachers could be associated with some facilitation of sex identity and better academic performance for boys, the influence of male teachers is not likely to differ greatly from that of female teachers. Furthermore, the results of the studies support the theoretically based contention that the performance of girls is not related to the sex of the teacher. These results are in agreement with the emphasis in modelling studies on the importance of the sex appropriateness of the behavior modelled rather than the sex of model. It is interesting that the majority of the studies that do report some positive findings are conducted with either very young or older elementary school children, as expected from the social learning and cognitive developmental theories respectively. However, the greater number of studies with positive findings on older children might just be a reflection of the greater number of studies performed at this level. Overall, the studies do not support the importance of the variable of the age of child in determining responsivity of the child to the sex of the teacher.

While the sex of the teacher, as is clear from the studies in the field, is not a major explanatory factor of student sex differences, there are enough positive results scattered in the literature to suggest that it may have some relevance to children's performance and development. There is some evidence suggesting that very young boys taught by male teachers may have somewhat greater masculine sex identification, better mathematics and spatial aptitude scores, and better school attitudes and behavior. Studies of children in the early elementary grades, however, almost unanimously have

failed to yield positive findings. Studies with children in the later elementary school grades have mostly concluded that the sex of the teacher is not an important variable, but gains have sporadically been reported for boys' masculine identification, mathematics and reading scores, and school attitudes when taught by male teachers.

However, the question of the possible effects of male teachers has been investigated only sparsely. Furthermore, those few studies variously suffer from design limitations. These include: brief duration of student contact with male teachers,lack of control for equality of status of male and female teachers, disproportionate concentration of studies at about the fifth grade level, lack of studies examining the effect of male teachers on students with particular problems, failure to sample female as well as male teachers, use of too small a teacher or student sample, the confounding of the variable sex of male teacher with that of sex-segregated classrooms, failure to replicate findings, and limited use of observational measures.Lack of controls was sometimes noted vis-à-vis the family background characteristics of students, such as paternal availability and socioeconomic and marital status of the parents. Failure to study girls as often and extensively as boys and failure to measure scholastic achievement can also be considered as important limitations in the scope of some studies.

Possible differences in teacher characteristics often seem to be ignored, including teacher's age, amount of training, years of experience, level of masculinity or feminity and qualitative aspects of teaching styles. That such variables require scrutiny is supported by Manning's (1978) study of personal and professional characteristics of male elementary teachers. It was found, among a number of other possibly relevant variables, that these men's undergraduate degrees were not in elementary education, that most of the male teachers had less than six years of teaching experience and that they

mostly taught at the grades five, six and seven levels.

Bearing in mind the limitations of these studies, it appears that even though the teacher's gender may have some relation to student performance, it does not have a direct, overriding influence, appears to be more salient for male rather than female students, and does not appear to be as important as some other variables (Brophy & Good, 1974; Stasz, Weinberg & McDonald, 1974), for instance, effect of race (Brownlee, 1976; Henderson, 1977).

Increasing the number of male teachers in the early school grades as a proposed panacea to alleviate boys' school difficulties is relatively circumscribed, flexible, and appeals to common sense as well as to widespread bias. However, it is an alternative which is unlikely to be effective. The difficulties boys experience in school appear to be based, at least in part, on some of the incompatible demands of the male sex role and student role. These roles are defined by widespread social and institutional factors rather than simply by the presence or absence of male teachers. Within the school system, other answers besides the increase of the number of male teachers must be sought. For instance, the effect of school curricula that require a more active response from students may warrant closer scrutiny. Varied, complex and sophisticated solutions that extend beyond the school system are required, and such changes are difficult to identify and to effect.

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Table 1

Studies Reviewed Showing Positive Effects of Male Teachers on Boys

	Abilities, School Achievement	School-Related Attitudes, Enjoyment	Sex-Role	Behavior
Abbott (1969 kindergarten and grade 1)		better attitudes	better sex-role identification over a long term	
Brophy & Laosa (1973, kindergarten)	better spatial relations, not replicated			
Lee & Wolinsky (1973, preschool to grade 2)		boys preferred male teachers, who were seen by boys as preferring boys		
Perdue & Connor (1978, preschool)		boys touched male teachers more often than female teachers		
Gold, Reis & Berger (1979, preschool)				better behavior ratings by teachers
Serbin, Connor & Citron (Note 1, preschool)			boys played more with masculine sex-typed toys	
Etaugh & Harlow (1965, grades 5 &6)		rated same-sex teachers more positively		

Table 1 (Continued)

	Abilities, School Achievement	School-Related Attitudes, Enjoyment	Sex-Role	Behavior
Steele (1967, grade 4)		more teacher-pupil identification	greater masculine sex-role preference	
Shinedling & Pederson (1970, grade 4)	better reading vocabulary and comprehension, arithmetic reasoning			
Smith (1971, grade 5)	better mathematical problem-solving	improved school-related self-concepts	lower psychological effeminacy scores	
Forslund & Hull (1972); Hull (1969, grade 6)		perceived relationships with male teachers as more positive		
Murray (1977, grade 5-6)		more consensual school attitudes		
Henderson (1977, grade 5-6)		improved self-concepts for white male students		